

What is claimed is:

1 1. A program reception apparatus for receiving and
2 reproducing programs, comprising:

3 first receiving means for receiving programs which
4 are sent via a first transmission path to a receiver group
5 made up of a plurality of program reception apparatuses;

6 second receiving means for receiving programs which
7 are sent via a second transmission path different with
8 the first transmission path to a part of the receiver group,
9 wherein a program received by at least one of the first
10 and second receiving means is accompanied, at a
11 predetermined timing, with switch information for
12 specifying a program to be received by a different one
13 of the first and second receiving means;

14 controlling means for controlling reception so that
15 one of the first and second receiving means receives a
16 program at one time, the program hereafter referred to
17 as a first program; and

18 extracting means for extracting, when the first
19 program is accompanied with the switch information, the
20 switch information,

21 wherein the controlling means includes:

22 switching means for switching, when the switch
23 information is extracted by the extracting means, the
24 reception from the first program to a second program

25 specified by the extracted switch information.

1 2. The program reception apparatus of Claim 1,
2 wherein the controlling means further includes:
3 acquiring means for acquiring return information for
4 specifying the first program, before the reception is
5 switched from the first program to the second program;
6 and
7 returning means for switching, when the received
8 second program is accompanied with a return signal, the
9 reception from the second program back to the first program
10 specified by the return information.

1 3. The program reception apparatus of Claim 1,
2 wherein the controlling means further includes:
3 acquiring means for acquiring return information for
4 specifying the first program, before the reception is
5 switched from the first program to the second program;
6 counting means for counting a predetermined time
7 which elapses since the reception is switched from the
8 first program to the second program; and
9 returning means for switching, when the
10 predetermined time has elapsed, the reception from the
11 second program back to the first program specified by the
12 return information.

1 4. The program reception apparatus of Claim 1,
2 wherein the switch information includes a return
3 time which is a time period from when the reception is
4 switched from the first program to the second program to
5 when the reception is switched from the second program
6 back to the first program, and

7 the controlling means further includes:

8 acquiring means for acquiring return information for
9 specifying the first program, before the reception is
10 switched from the first program to the second program;

11 counting means for counting the return time which
12 elapses since the reception is switched from the first
13 program to the second program; and

14 returning means for switching, when the return time
15 has elapsed, the reception from the second program back
16 to the first program specified by the return information.

1 5. The program reception apparatus of Claim 1,

2 wherein the first receiving means receives a program
3 which is broadcast to the plurality of program reception
4 apparatuses located in a predetermined geographical area,
5 and

6 the second receiving means receives a program which
7 is broadcast to at least one of the plurality of program

8 reception apparatuses located in a part of the
9 predetermined geographical area.

1 6. The program reception apparatus of Claim 5,
2 wherein the first receiving means receives a
3 satellite broadcast program, and
4 the second receiving means receives a non-satellite
5 broadcast program.

1 7. The program reception apparatus of Claim 6,
2 wherein the switching means switches the reception
3 from the satellite broadcast program to the non-satellite
4 broadcast program.

1 8. The program reception apparatus of Claim 5,
2 wherein the first receiving means receives a main
3 program which is broadcast across the predetermined
4 geographical area, and
5 the second receiving means receives a commercial or
6 news which is broadcast to only the part of the
7 predetermined geographical area.

1 9. The program reception apparatus of Claim 8,
2 wherein the switching means switches the reception
3 from the main program to the commercial or news.

1 10. The program reception apparatus of Claim 1,
2 wherein the controlling means controls the first
3 receiving means to receive the first program which is
4 accompanied with the switch information, the switch
5 information including pairs of transmitter information
6 and characteristics information which are in a one-to-one
7 correspondence with the programs that can be received by
8 the second receiving means, the transmitter information
9 showing a transmitter of a program, and the
10 characteristics information showing characteristics of
11 users or program reception apparatuses that should
12 receive the program,
13 the extracting means extracts the switch information
14 accompanying the first program, and
15 the switching means includes:
16 characteristics information storing means for
17 storing characteristics information showing
18 characteristics of the program reception apparatus or a
19 user of the program reception apparatus;
20 transmitter specifying means for specifying a
21 transmitter, based on transmitter information which is
22 paired with characteristics information, among the pairs
23 of transmitter information and characteristics
24 information included in the extracted switch information,

25 that matches the characteristics information stored in
26 the characteristics information storing means; and
27 switch executing means for instructing the first
28 receiving means to stop receiving the first program, and
29 instructing the second receiving means to receive a
30 program from the specified transmitter as the second
31 program.

1 11. The program reception apparatus of Claim 10,
2 wherein the first receiving means receives a
3 television program which is broadcast one-sidedly to
4 unspecified program reception apparatuses, and
5 the second receiving means receives an internet
6 program which is transmitted to only program reception
7 apparatuses which have requested the internet program.

1 12. The program reception apparatus of Claim 11,
2 wherein the switching means switches the reception
3 from the television program to the internet program.

1 13. The program reception apparatus of Claim 10,
2 wherein the first receiving means receives a main
3 program which is broadcast across a predetermined
4 geographical area, and
5 the second receiving means receives a commercial or

6 news which is broadcast to only a part of the predetermined
7 geographical area.

1 14. The program reception apparatus of Claim 13,
2 wherein the switching means switches the reception
3 from the main program to the commercial or news.

1 15. A method used in a program reception apparatus
2 for receiving and reproducing programs, comprising:

3 a first receiving step for receiving programs which
4 are sent via a first transmission path to a receiver group
5 made up of a plurality of program reception apparatuses;

6 a second receiving step for receiving programs which
7 are sent via a second transmission path different with
8 the first transmission path to a part of the receiver group,
9 wherein a program received by at least one of the first
10 and second receiving steps is accompanied, at a
11 predetermined timing, with switch information for
12 specifying a program to be received by a different one
13 of the first and second receiving steps;

14 a controlling step for controlling reception so that
15 one of the first and second receiving steps receives a
16 program at one time, the program hereafter referred to
17 as a first program; and

18 an extracting step for extracting, when the first

19 program is accompanied with the switch information, the
20 switch information,
21 wherein the controlling step includes:
22 a switching step for switching, when the switch
23 information is extracted by the extracting step, the
24 reception from the first program to a second program
25 specified by the extracted switch information.

1 16. A computer program used in a program reception
2 apparatus for receiving and reproducing programs,
3 comprising:
4 a first receiving step for receiving programs which
5 are sent via a first transmission path to a receiver group
6 made up of a plurality of program reception apparatuses;
7 a second receiving step for receiving programs which
8 are sent via a second transmission path different with
9 the first transmission path to a part of the receiver group,
10 wherein a program received by at least one of the first
11 and second receiving steps is accompanied, at a
12 predetermined timing, with switch information for
13 specifying a program to be received by a different one
14 of the first and second receiving steps;
15 a controlling step for controlling reception so that
16 one of the first and second receiving steps receives a
17 program at one time, the program hereafter referred to

18 as a first program; and
19 an extracting step for extracting, when the first
20 program is accompanied with the switch information, the
21 switch information,
22 wherein the controlling step includes:
23 a switching step for switching, when the switch
24 information is extracted by the extracting step, the
25 reception from the first program to a second program
26 specified by the extracted switch information.